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AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 000101

AF/E FOR MARIA BEYZEROV  
ANTANANARIVO FOR DAO  
NAIROBI FOR KUSLO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2019  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [SE](#)  
SUBJECT: GOS REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE AGAINST PIRATES  
PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO PUSH SOFA

REF: A. A. PORT LOUIS 316  
[1](#)B. B. BARBER/MCMANUS/BLASER EMAIL JAN 27 2009  
[1](#)C. C. BLASER/BEYZEROV EMAILS MARCH 17  
[1](#)D. MARCH 25  
[1](#)E. AND MARCH 31 2009

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Virginia M. Blaser for reasons 1.4 b  
and d.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On March 30, Post received a GOS diplomatic note requesting more frequent surveillance patrols by U.S. forces in Seychellois waters to help deter piracy. The diplomatic note was a follow-up to an earlier telephone call between the Acting Foreign Minister (A/FM) and the Charge. Charge was noncommittal about the GOS request, but did opine that the USG would possibly look more favorably on a request for more U.S. military ships in the area if there was a SOFA agreement in place. Post believes this GOS request presents an excellent opportunity for a call from a senior Department official to the Seychelles President in order to reinforce USG interest in SOFA completion, particularly in the context of piracy issues. For protection of the tens of thousands of U.S. military personnel visiting Seychelles each year, the SOFA completion remains one of Post's highest priorities. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On OOB of Monday, March 30, 2009 the Embassy received a diplomatic note from the GOS requesting more patrols by U.S. forces in Seychellois waters to help deter piracy. The diplomatic note was a follow-up to a 26 March telephone call between the Acting Foreign Minister, J. Nourrice, and the Charge. During this call, Nourrice said his government is extremely worried about pirate attacks on Seychelles ships and citizens, most particularly the current situation wherein pirates captured three Seychellois citizens and took them to Somalia, where they are being held for ransom. Nourrice acknowledged that the GOS request for more U.S. patrols was falling at a time when his government had not responded to repeated Embassy requests for finalization of the ten-year pending SOFA. He noted the link between the (then proposed) diplomatic note and the need for the GOS to finalize their internal review of the SOFA. Charge did not respond to the specific request for assistance, but did opine that the USG would possibly look more favorably on a demarche for more U.S. military ships in the area if there was a SOFA agreement to protect US military personnel who would be present on the islands. Nourrice agreed to carry this informal message back to GOS interlocutors reviewing the current SOFA agreement.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Copy of the text, as written in original English, from the diplomatic note is as follows:

BEGIN TEXT OF DIPLOMATIC NOTE:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States

of America and would like to bring to the latter's attention an incident whereby three Seychellois nationals have been captured and are presently being detained by Somalian pirates.

Given the gravity of this particular incident and having also noticed a surge in the piracy activities in and around the Exclusive Economic Zone of Seychelles, the Government of Seychelles is of the view that there is an urgent need to intensify the security in this area.

To this effect it would be appreciated if the Government of the United States of America could kindly consider taking all appropriate measures to strengthen the surveillance patrol in these zones in order to deter criminal activities related to the acts of piracy, which could be very detrimental to the security of our region.

The Ministry would be grateful for the collaboration of the Government of the United States in our joint efforts in combating this worrying phenomenon.

In thanking the Embassy of the United States of America for its usual cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles avails itself of this opportunity to renew to it the assurances of its highest consideration.

END TEXT.

14. (C) COMMENT: The US-Seychelles SOFA has been pending for the past ten years, with Post actively negotiating for SOFA's completion the past year or so. The signing of a SOFA is one of Post's top priorities, given that the tens of thousands of U.S. military members who visit the islands every year are unduly vulnerable without a SOFA in place. Post considers it fortunate we have had no major incident in the past few years, but note the frequent ship visits mean that the potential for a problem is constantly present. We credit our CCE team, who handles most ship visits, and the experienced NCIS agent typically assigned to Seychelles ship visits for the low rate of incidents.

15. (C) Since the most recent DOD revisions (in response to Seychelles' last proposed changes) to the draft SOFA were forwarded to the GOS in the Fall of 2008, the Embassy has engaged the GOS at multiple levels, including ambassadorial calls on the President, in attempts to address remaining issues and conclude the agreement. In recent weeks, repeated GOS promises to submit a draft agreement to the Cabinet by a given date have been broken, and, while a 16 March call from the Charge to President Michel on the issue pushed the agreement to the Attorney General for "final" review, no tangible result surfaced since that time. Post will continue to push at multiple levels, and believes the above diplomatic request provides an excellent opportunity to push the immediate passage of the SOFA in Seychelles. Post recommends the Department consider a call between the President of the Seychelles and a senior AF representative. Such a call would reinforce the Embassy's repeated message and, in so doing, help complete the outstanding agreement.

16. (C) ACTION REQUESTED: Post recommends Department consider a Washington-based call to Seychelles President to reinforce Embassy points on SOFA and piracy. Post believes that the GOS-generated diplomatic note provides an excellent context for such a call. Please advise, and Post will be pleased to arrange for the call and provide talking points as appropriate.

BLASER